AMENDMENT(S) TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 30, with the following rewritten paragraph:

According to the invention, a blank segment that does not correspond to recorded visual content is identified in a set of visual recording data. The invention identifies a blank segment using a blank frame detector that is adapted to evaluate a frame of visual recording data to determine whether the frame of visual recording data is a blank frame, and a blank segment detector that is adapted to receive input from one or more blank frame detectors regarding a group of frames of visual recording data and to evaluate a characteristic of a the group of frames of visual recording data to determine whether the group of frames of visual recording data is a blank segment comprising a multiplicity of blank frames that does not correspond to recorded visual content. The invention can advantageously be implemented so that blank segments are detected in "real time," either as a set of visual recording data is acquired or as a set of visual recording data is being processed for another purpose (e.g., as a set of analog visual recording data is digitized).

– 2 –

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 17, line 28, with the following rewritten paragraph:

As indicated above, in step 103 of the method 100, blank frames are grouped together into blank segments as blank frames are determined. Identifying blank segments as the frames of visual recording data are being evaluated to identify blank frames can be desirable for at least two reasons. First, identifying blank segments "on-the-fly" enables an ongoing determination as to whether other processing of the visual recording data (e.g., digitization of analog visual recording data) should be terminated. For example, when the most recent blank segment becomes long enough (e.g., 2 minutes), indicating that no further visual recording content is represented by the remainder of the visual recording data, the other processing of the visual recording data can be terminated. Second, the identification of blank segments "on-the-fly" can be used to identify a segment boundary in the set of visual recording data when the segment categorization changes, as described in more detail below, which can result in the identification of segment boundaries that other processes or apparatus for identifying segment boundaries, such as an external cut detector (i.e., a process other than a process in accordance with the invention that identifies scene cuts in a set of visual recording data), may not identify. For example, an external cut detector may not identify a segment boundary between a black screen segment <u>and</u> snow-static segment, or

— 3 —

perhaps more importantly, between a black screen segment and a content segment that includes a sequence of very dark images; the invention can identify such segment boundaries.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 22, line 12, with the following rewritten paragraph:

However, often, snow-static frames are dark enough that snow-static frames are not separated from black screen frames by external cut detectors. It is desirable to identify blank segments that include both snow-static and black screen frames. Therefore, a snow-static segment detector in accordance with the invention can be implemented so that a sequence of frames is identified as a blank segment if 1) a specified minimum number of frames in the sequence of frames have been identified as snow-static frames, 2) there are enough frames in the sequence of frames that have been identified either as black screen frames, or identified and confirmed as snow-static frames, and 3) the black screen frames in the sequence of frames are sufficiently similar in color to one another. For example, a blank segment detector in accordance with the invention can be implemented so that the first condition in the immediately preceding sentence can be satisfied if at least 5 snow-static frames have been identified in the sequence of frames. A blank segment detector in accordance with invention can be implemented so that the second condition in the immediately preceding sentence is satisfied

— 4 —

if a specified percentage (e.g., 95%) of the frames in the sequence have been identified as black screen frames and/or confirmed snow-static frames. (The blank segment detector can, if appropriate, be further implemented as described above to account for visual recording apparatus that produce frames at the beginning of a blank segment that neither correspond to visual recording content or conform to the appearance of other frames of the blank ~~segment~~ segment). A blank segment detector in accordance with invention can be implemented so that, when the visual recording data is specified so that the numerical value of each color component of each pixel can vary between 0 255, the third condition in the immediately preceding sentence can be satisfied if the variance of the average (over an entire frame) of each color component for the frames identified as black screen frames is less than 10. If, in a blank segment detector that makes use of the three above-described conditions, the condition(s) are satisfied, then the segment is identified as a snow-static blank segment.

— 5 —